

ITP – Proposed Recommendation 7.2b: Include an optional DMM for the “New Norm” for sustainable landscapes

Purpose: In 2006, the California Legislature adopted AB 1881 which required DWR to adopt a model water efficient landscape ordinance by January 1, 2009. Local agencies (counties and cities) were required to adopt water efficient landscape ordinances on or before January 1, 2010. While the landscape ordinances that were adopted are effective at setting standards for new development or for sites making significant changes in landscaping, they do not adequately address existing landscapes through market transformation. In addition, the current landscape DMM is to implement “large landscape programs and incentives,” and does not address a sustainable landscape approach that considers that most of the outdoor water use is by residential customers who are best reached through market transformation measures. This proposal is to add an optional DMM that utilizes market transformation measures to promote the “New Norm” for sustainable landscapes.

Recently, the CUWCC launched an initiative to create a “New Norm” for landscapes. This new norm is defined by several elements, including:

- *A Watershed-Based Model for Sustainability* – Geographic areas are connected through watersheds. And because upstream landscape runoff has impacts downstream, a watershed-based approach is needed to support the “New Norm.” In addition, under the requirements issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, storm water agencies are becoming more responsible for ensuring water quality through establishing and enforcing requirements for landscape management and design using low impact development. And while the current model landscape ordinance establishes designs which minimize water use, it does not consider low impact development approaches.
- *Stewardship and Resource Efficiency* – Shifting to the “New Norm” requires an increased awareness of the environment and the potential impacts from conventional landscaping practices. This requires a broader and more holistic approach to landscapes. And because the current model landscape ordinance only focuses on reducing water use, it does not take a comprehensive resource efficiency approach. A resource efficiency approach would consider reduced green waste, reduced pesticide and chemical use, capture of rainwater, use of graywater, use of local building materials, proper soils and mulching to control weeds and conserve moisture, and reduced urban runoff.
- *Market Transformation* - Broad public acceptance of the “New Norm” can only be achieved through market transformation. Sustainable landscape designs need to be aesthetically pleasing. Encouraging the installation of sustainable landscapes through public outreach and education will set an example of what is beautiful and encourage the public to voluntarily change out their landscapes. The landscape industry, do-it-yourself television programs, water suppliers, storm water agencies, and non-governmental organizations can support market transformation by educating the public on how to achieve beautiful and sustainable landscapes.

Proposal: Update the Urban Water Management Planning Act to include an optional DMM for market transformation measures that support the “New Norm” for sustainable landscapes. Essential to the success of the “New Norm” is an update to the Model Landscape Ordinance by the Department of Water Resources in consultation with other stakeholders, including those from the water supply, storm water, and landscape sectors.

Recommended Language For Optional DMM:

10631 (f)

(f) Provide a description of the supplier's optional water demand management measures. This description may include the following:

10631 (f)(1)(O) Market transformation measures that encourage customers to convert to sustainable landscapes.